

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BONN 21613 01 OF 02 271651Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
-----271655Z 001516 /43
O R 271636Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4302
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 21613

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS ACTION SECDEF WASHDC AND INFO USNMR
SHAPE AND USCINCEUR VAHINGEN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, MASS, NATO, PO, GW, US
SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE FORCE MODERNIZATION

REFS: (A) STATE 310763 DTG 240140Z DEC 76;
(B) USNATO 7008 DTG 231654Z DEC 76;
(C) BONN 19750 DTG 231300Z NOV 76 NOTAL

BEGIN SUMMARY: FRG PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE
TO PORTUGUESE FORCE MODERNIZATION HAVE NOW BEEN APPROVED
BY DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER AND ARE BEFORE THE FOREIGN
MINISTER. APPROVAL WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED BY THE
FINANCE MINISTER AND THE CHANCELLOR. FRG DEFENSE
OFFICIALS AGREE IN PRINCIPLE TO THE APPROACH SUGGESTED
BY THE US FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH OTHER NATO ALLIES, BUT
THEY DO NOT BELIEVE SUCH APPROACHES SHOULD BE MADE, OR
THAT FRG OFFERS OF SUPPORT CAN BE FIRMED UP, BEFORE THE
PORTUGUESE THEMSELVES HAVE MADE KNOWN THEIR REQUIREMENTS.
THE FMOD DOES NOT EXPECT TO RECEIVE THOSE REQUIREMENTS
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SECRET

PAGE 02 BONN 21613 01 OF 02 271651Z

BEFORE THE END OF JANUARY. END SUMMARY

1. FRG DEFENSE OFFICIALS SHARE US VIEW OF THE IMPORT-
ANCE OF RAPID PROGRESS IN PORTUGUESE FORCE MODERNIZATION
AND OF THE NEED FOR ACTIVE SUPPORT FROM OTHER NATO
ALLIES. WITH A DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDING, HOWEVER, OF

THE STATUS OF PORTUGAL'S OWN PLANNING, GERMAN VIEWS ON THE TIMING AND SEQUENCE OF NEXT STEPS DO NOT YET AGREE WITH OUR OWN.

2. EMBOFF WENT OVER INSTRUCTIONS IN REFTTEL A WITH MAJOR GENERAL BRANDT, ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF (POL/MIL AFFAIRS), FMOD, ON DEC 27. BRANDT SEEMED UNAWARE OF PLANS FOR A JANUARY MEETING OF THE AD HOC GROUP ON ASSISTANCE TO PORTUGAL AND QUESTIONED WHETHER SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE ADVISABLE BEFORE THE PORTUGUESE HAD MADE KNOWN THEIR REQUESTS FOR EQUIPMENT. HE DID NOT EXPECT TO RECEIVE THESE REQUESTS BEFORE THE LAST WEEK IN JANUARY AT THE EARLIEST.

3. GENERAL BRANDT RECALLED THAT, WHEN THE US/FRG SURVEY TEAM CHIEFS PRESENTED THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PORTUGUESE IN AUGUST, THEY WERE TOLD THEY WOULD BE INVITED BACK TO LISBON IN OCTOBER TO RECEIVE THE PORTUGUESE REACTIONS. THE OCTOBER MEETING DID NOT TAKE PLACE, AND THE GERMANS ARE NOW EXPECTING THE MEETING TO BE HELD AT THE END OF JANUARY. BRANDT SAID HE HAD RECENTLY DISCUSSED THE TIMING QUESTION WITH A PENTAGON COUNTERPART BY PHONE AND THOUGHT THE US WAS ALSO WORKING ON THE SAME TIMEFRAME. HE DID NOT SEE HOW THE ALLIES COULD MAKE SPECIFIC OFFERS OF EQUIPMENT UNTIL THE PORTUGUESE HAD MADE THEIR OWN DESIRES KNOWN.

4. BRANDT ALSO DISCUSSED THE STATUS OF INTERNAL FRG PLANNING, STATING THAT THE GERMANS WERE BEHIND THE US IN PART BECAUSE DISCUSSIONS OF FORMATION OF THE NEW
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BONN 21613 01 OF 02 271651Z

GOVERNMENT (DEC L4) HAD TAKEN PRIORITY. DEFENSE MINISTRY PROPOSALS HAD, HOWEVER, NOW BEEN THOROUGHLY STAFFED IN THE FMOD AND HAD BEEN APPROVED BY MINISTER LEBER. THESE PROPOSALS HAD BEEN FORWARDED TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE, AND HE WAS INFORMED THAT A MEMORANDUM CONTAINING FOREIGN OFFICE STAFF LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS WAS SENT TO FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER ON DECEMBER 23. BRANDT SAID GENSCHER WAS IN BONN AND MIGHT ACT ON THE PROPOSALS AS EARLY AS THIS WEEK.

5. BEFORE AN FRG POSITION CAN BE TAKEN, HOWEVER, IT MUST ALSO BE APPROVED BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND BY THE CHANCELLOR (WHO IS VACATIONING IN SPAIN UNTIL JANUARY 7). BRANDT EXPLAINED THAT THIS HIGH-LEVEL APPROVAL WAS ALL THE MORE NECESSARY BECAUSE THE FRG

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PAGE 01 BONN 21613 02 OF 02 271649Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 21613

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HAD NEVER BEFORE PROVIDED ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF
ADVISERS AND THAT A SPECIAL POLITICAL DECISION WOULD BE
REQUIRED FOR SENDING NOT ONLY EQUIPMENT BUT PERSONNEL.

6. BRANDT CONTINUED THAT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WAS NOT UNTIL JANUARY 25,
BUT THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT THE THREE MINISTERS AND
THE CHANCELLOR WOULD DISCUSS THE ISSUE BEFORE THEN ON
THE EDGE OF A CABINET MEETING.

7. BRANDT PREFERRED NOT TO RESPOND TO THE SPECIFIC
QUESTIONS IN PARA 5, REFTEL A, UNTIL HE COULD GO OVER
THE US PRESENTATION WITH HIS STAFF EXPERTS. ASKED
WHETHER THE PROPOSALS APPROVED BY LEBER AND FORWARDED
TO GENSCHER INCLUDED PROVISION OF THE 50 TANKS (REF C),
BRANDT SAID HE WAS NOT CERTAIN OF THE NUMBER BUT THAT
TANKS WERE INCLUDED--BUT ONLY IF THE PORTUGUESE REQUESTED
THEM. AS FOR THE US IDEAS ON SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS
WHICH MIGHT BE MADE BY OTHER NATO ALLIES, BRANDT'S
PRELIMINARY IMPRESSION WAS THAT THEY SEEMED LIKE GOOD
IDEAS BUT THAT ALL OF THEM WOULD HAVE TO BE PRECEDED
BY AN "IF"--IF THE GOP ASKED FOR THAT TYPE OF ASSISTANCE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BONN 21613 02 OF 02 271649Z

8. BRANDT STRESSED THAT HE WAS NOT OPPOSED TO A MEETING OF THE AD HOC GROUP, AND HE AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO THE DESIRABILITY OF LOBBYING WITH OTHER ALLIES. HE RESERVED JUDGMENT ON TIMING OF SUCH APPROACHES PENDING FULLER STUDY OF THE US PROPOSAL, BUT HOPED TO PROVIDE A FURTHER REACTION IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

9. COMMENT: WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE MORE FORMAL FRG RESPONSE TO OUR PROPOSAL WILL IN LARGE MEASURE BE DEPENDENT ON NEXT STEPS TAKEN BY THE PORTUGUESE THEMSELVES. IF AS EXPECTED BY USNATO (PARA 2, REF B) THE PORTUGUESE RELEASE THEIR REQUEST TO THE ALLIES IN EARLY JANUARY, RATHER THAN WAITING FOR A RETURN VISIT TO LISBON BY THE US/FRG SURVEY TEAM, THIS MAY EXPEDITE GERMAN ACTION. BRANDT INDICATED IN ANY CASE THAT THE STAFF LEVEL WERE URGING THE CABINET TO REACH EARLY DECISIONS, BUT THE HIGH-LEVEL CLEARANCES REQUIRED WILL STILL TAKE TIME.
STOESSEL

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